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Recommendation to the Executive Board

UNICEF Maurice Pate Award

Summary

The Executive Director *recommends* that, for 2000, the UNICEF Maurice Pate Award be presented to the Jamaican non-governmental organization Rural Family Support Organization (RuFamSo), and that the Executive Board approve an allocation of $25,000 from regular resources for this purpose.

1. Nominations for the 2000 UNICEF Maurice Pate Award were invited from the Governments of Board member countries, UNICEF representatives and regional directors, and National Committees for UNICEF, in order to ensure a broad range of input. A total of 19 nominations was received as follows: 4 from Africa; 5 from the Americas and the Caribbean; 6 from Asia; 2 from the Middle East and North Africa; and 2 from Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States.

2. After a careful review of all the nominations, the Bureau endorsed the recommendation of the Executive Director that the 2000 UNICEF Maurice Pate Award be conferred upon the non-governmental organization (NGO) Rural Family Support Organization (RuFamSo), for advancing the survival, protection and development of young children and adolescents in Jamaica through a holistic and integrated programme of family support. The work of RuFamSo is noteworthy for:

(a) Its exceptional efforts in empowering adolescents with the means and employment opportunities to break the inter-generational cycle of poverty and to help them identify and tackle the underlying causes of their problems;

(b) Providing safety nets to enable adolescent parents to pull themselves out of poverty through access to care and protection for their infants and through quality educational opportunities;

(c) Its innovative work with adolescents to prevent pregnancies and to ensure that teenage parents reach their full educational potential, develop life and marketable skills, and become better parents, through

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increased knowledge of early childhood care and development practices;

(d) Advancing gender-balanced programming and youth participation; and

(e) Promoting an effective and replicable model of sustainable, low-cost, grass-roots programmes for poor families in Jamaica.

3. RuFamSo began in 1986 as a project addressing the specific needs of teenage mothers. By 1996, it had evolved into a full-fledged NGO offering four distinct and complementary programmes. Its work in Jamaica is concentrated in 60 of the poorest communities in 3 rural central parishes, out of a total of 14. These three parishes account for 32 per cent of Jamaica's total population, and approximately 38 per cent of children living in poverty. The critical problems affecting these areas are a high prevalence of female-headed households, teenage pregnancies, parent-child separation and out-of-school youth; inadequate access to early childhood services and primary health care; and a declining agricultural and manufacturing base, coupled with pervasive unemployment and underemployment.

4. RuFamSo has been playing a key role in Jamaica by addressing these problems through four effective programmes that target the poor: the Teenage Mothers Programme, Male Adolescent Programme, Uplifting Adolescents Programme and Roving Caregivers Programme. Cumulatively, they have provided critical support in the areas of literacy and remedial work, life skills training, counselling and family life education, vocational and technical training, parenting education, and young child stimulation and development. Importantly, lessons from the work of RuFamSo have enriched the formation and development of policy in these areas. To date, RuFamSo has received approximately $2.1 million for its programmes. The primary funding sources include: the Bernard van Leer Foundation, UNICEF, the United States Agency for International Development, the Inter-American Foundation, the Government of Jamaica and the Jamaica Aluminium Company. In-kind support has also been made available to RuFamSo from the University of the West Indies, the Government of Jamaica, Food for the Poor, the private sector, civic organizations and community-based groups.

5. Jamaica has one of the highest rates of teenage pregnancy in the English-speaking Caribbean. Studies have demonstrated that Jamaican girls who become pregnant in their teens are likely to have one to three children before the age of 19. This results in social and economic disadvantages and high drop-out rates, with their children often neglected, ending up performing poorly at school and being at greater risk of environmental hazards, disability and abuse. These children often become sexually active at a very early age, and this serves as a major contributor in the perpetuation of the vicious cycle of poverty.

6. The Teenage Mothers Programme began modestly by targeting 30 participants in 1986; by 1999, the programme had expanded to accommodate 75 direct project beneficiaries. A large proportion of other women in the communities of the targeted teenage mothers benefit indirectly from the informal sharing of information and advice in community meetings and individual peer counselling. The focus of this programme has been the provision of educational opportunities, skills training and counselling. The children of the teenage mothers are cared for by RuFamSo while mothers attend classes and participate in other programme offerings. The programme has also established "Grandparent Groups" as forums for parents of teenage mothers to share experiences in dealing with problems and to gain exposure to adolescent psychology, family budgeting and survival strategies.

7. The Teenage Mothers Programme has been crucial in achieving a near 100 per cent prevention rate of second pregnancies for the teenage mothers benefiting from the interventions. A tracer study conducted in 1999 showed that more than 20 per cent of participants had been able to complete tertiary education, and that the total number of participants had found gainful employment. The same study also demonstrated that the parent-child separation ratio had decreased significantly. This has highlighted the potential of RuFamSo's programming to strengthen the fabric of the Jamaican family. Participating mothers have also acquired a renewed sense of pride and dignity, as well as stronger leadership skills.

8. The Male Adolescent Programme started with 21 participants and is now providing comprehensive services directly to approximately 70 students annually. The programme provides a safety net for boys who have dropped out of school, and fosters the development of well-rounded individuals through skills training and counselling, enabling them to make a

positive contribution to society. The majority of graduates of this programme obtain the national certificate for technical and vocational training, which makes them employable in the labour market.

9. The Uplifting Adolescents Programme has also grown since its inception, from 250 students to approximately 600 by the year 2000. The programme is oriented towards adolescents who have dropped out of school and require specialized attention and counselling. A growing number programme participants have been able to pass nationally administered secondary school entrance examinations. In addition, results of a literacy survey conducted in 1999 revealed that the male participants have obtained higher results than the national average. The Male Adolescent Programme and Uplifting Adolescents Programme have gained such a positive reputation that they are currently unable to accommodate the very high demand from adolescents. To address this overwhelming need, RuFamSo has approached other NGOs to provide similar interventions.

10. One of RuFamSo's flagship programmes is its Roving Caregivers Programme. This home-visit child-care and development initiative is designed to support children up to three years of age and their parents through stimulation, child-care education, skills training and income-generating projects. Having started with 10 homes and 250 children, it is now providing services directly to 530 homes and approximately 2,600 children annually. Indirect beneficiaries include siblings, other family members and neighbours of children visited by the programme.

11. The programme complements the Teenage Mothers Programme by ensuring that improved child-care practices are carried over into the home. An on-site demonstration day-care centre, comprised exclusively of the infants of adolescents in the Teenage Mothers Programme, provides a model for developmentally appropriate care. The centre provides training for the Roving Caregivers, caregivers in home-based nurseries, parents and students in the Male Adolescent Programme, and also provides students from secondary schools in the region the opportunity to gain work experience.

12. The Roving Caregivers themselves benefit from the programme. A significant number of these adolescents have moved onto tertiary institutions to upgrade their educational status. This transition has been greatly facilitated by the impact of the programme on increasing their knowledge of appropriate child-care practices.

13. An evaluation of RuFamSo's child-care programmes that uses an internationally recognized method has confirmed significantly higher levels in the social, cognitive and physical development of participating children, in comparison with those not benefiting from the programme. Research that charts the progress of the children in primary school demonstrates greater academic participation and achievement than among children not participating in the programme. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that boys and girls in the programme have performed equally well, thereby demonstrating the capacity of RuFamSo to contribute to breaking the traditional pattern of underperformance of boys in Jamaica.

14. RuFamSo has made an important and visible contribution in the area of advocacy and social mobilization, through its participation in several national and regional committees, as well as through its strategic linkages with the Jamaica Social Development Commission and the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF). RuFamSo is a primary partner of UNICEF in the basic education and early childhood development component of the Government of Jamaica/UNICEF country programme of cooperation.

15. As a member of the National Early Childhood Integration Advisory Committee, RuFamSo collaborates with the Government, UNICEF and other critical partners on a regular basis, on a wide range of policy and programme issues. For the past 10 years, RuFamSo has provided ongoing assistance to the National Early Childhood Programme through training and supervision for home-based nurseries in central Jamaica. Most recently, RuFamSo was named as the NGO representative in a strategic review of the programme being coordinated by the Planning Institute of Jamaica.

16. The organization's work on early childhood care and development activities has generated impressive multiplier effects in several areas. RuFamSo produces numerous publications which are used by the Government and NGOs in Jamaica. The organization is currently serving as the coordinating agency in the development of an early childhood home-visit manual, for national use.

17. RuFamSo was also a member of the professional group responsible for the development of the national occupational standards for early childhood workers, currently being adopted across the region. In 1998, through a poverty eradication initiative of the Government, under the auspices of the Caribbean Child Development Centre, the Roving Caregivers Programme was successfully replicated in 11 depressed inner city communities in Kingston, benefiting 1,300 children. As a result of its effectiveness, this programme has been adopted by the Jamaican Government as the national early childhood home-visit model, under its new integrated early childhood policy and programme. According to a 1999 JSIF report on a stakeholders consultation workshop, "RuFamSo is more than just ordinary ... it is in a super class by itself".

Background of the Award

18. At a special session on 11 November 1965, the Executive Board approved the recommendation of the Executive Director that the Nobel Peace Prize money received by UNICEF be used to establish a fund in memory of Maurice Pate, the first Executive Director of UNICEF (E/ICEF/537). Approval in principle was also given to a suggestion that the fund be used to strengthen the training or experience of people serving in child welfare-related fields in countries with which UNICEF was cooperating. It was believed that a memorial fund that contributed actively to the general purpose of UNICEF would have particularly appealed to Mr. Pate.

19. In May 1966, the Board approved a plan submitted by the Executive Director (E/ICEF/542, paras. 76-83) for a memorial fund that would give recognition to the value of regional training facilities in fields benefiting children. Each year the fund would honour an institution in a developing country that adapted and offered its services to people from countries in the region. The institution selected would be given some modest assistance to strengthen its services to other developing countries.

20. By the end of 1978, the original funding and contributions for this Award were exhausted and, in 1979, the Executive Board approved the continuation of the Award from general resources (E/ICEF/P/L.1906 (REC)).

21. At its 1988 session, the Executive Board approved the recommendation that the Board confer annually the UNICEF Maurice Pate Award, as detailed in document E/ICEF/1988/P/L.37, for extraordinary and exemplary leadership in, and contribution to, the advancement of the survival, protection and development of children, whether on a national, regional or global scale. The Award could be conferred upon an institution, organization or individual with or without government affiliation. A timetable and procedures for the nomination and selection process were to be established by the secretariat (see E/ICEF/1988/13, annex I, paras. 45-47, and decision 1988/9).

22. By broadening the criteria for recognition to include (a) achievements on behalf of children, (b) provision of resources to further those achievements and (c) the creation of examples lending themselves to emulation, the Executive Board can use the Award to encourage significant efforts on behalf of children. While encouraging leadership for children by individuals, the monetary benefits of the Award can be used to further relevant activities, whether training, experience exchange or direct programme activity.

23. The Executive Board reviewed and revised the selection process and criteria in 1989, 1990, 1991 and 1994. The latest procedures and criteria as approved by the Board are contained in document E/ICEF/1994/L.16. According to those procedures, nominations shall be sought from the Governments of Board member countries, UNICEF representatives, regional directors and other secretariat offices and National Committees for UNICEF, and the Bureau shall review all nominations. The Award may not be conferred upon any Government or Head of State or Government or upon any United Nations organization or official. The main criteria for the Award are: (a) extraordinary and exemplary leadership in, and contribution to, the advancement of the survival, protection and development of children; (b) innovative and inspirational work; (c) action on a national or regional scale with the potential for emulation; and (d) action that serves to encourage voluntary and grass-roots activities. Lastly, due regard shall be given to equitable geographical balance.

24. The UNICEF Maurice Pate Award has been given as follows:

Year	*Institution*	*Region*
Prior to 1980	Various institutions	Africa, Asia, Americas and the Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, industrialized countries and global
1981	College of Health Sciences, Bahrain	Middle East and North Africa
1982	University of the West Indies (regional institution)	Americas and the Caribbean
1983	Pan-African Institute for Development	Africa
1984	International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh	Global
1985	National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development, India	South Central Asia
1986	The League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies	Global
1987	The Catholic Church of El Salvador	Americas and the Caribbean
1988	Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga (Family Welfare Movement), Indonesia	East Asia and Pakistan
1989	Madame Suzanne Mubarak, Egypt	Middle East and North Africa
1990	Professor Olikoye Ransome-Kuti, Nigeria	West and Central Africa
1991	Child-to-Child Trust, United Kingdom	Industrialized countries
1992	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, Bangladesh	South Asia
1993	The People and State of Ceara, Brazil	Americas and the Caribbean
1994	All-China Women's Federation, China	East Asia and the Pacific
1995	Professor Ihsan Dogramaci, Turkey	Central and Eastern Europe, Commonwealth of Independent States and Baltic States
1996	Regional Centre for Health and Development, Benin	West and Central Africa
1997	Legal Assistance Centre, Namibia	Eastern and Southern Africa
1998	Pacific Regional Human Rights Education Resource Team	East Asia and the Pacific
1999	Kuleana	Eastern and Southern Africa